

NEWS from the T&I DEMOCRATS

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Democratic Caucus

U.S. House of Representatives, 2163 Rayburn HOB, Washington, DC 20515

www.house.gov/transportation_democrats

For Immediate Release: Thursday, May 25, 2006

Contact: Jim Berard, 202-225-6260

Oberstar, Pelosi, Melancon Seek Extension of Unemployment Benefits for Storm Victims

Letter warns that current benefits due to expire during upcoming recess.

WASHINGTON—Unemployment benefits for victims of last year’s devastating hurricanes will begin to expire during the Memorial Day recess unless Congress acts today.

That was the message three Democratic Members of Congress sent to Speaker Dennis Hastert last night.

Rep. James L. Oberstar (Minn.), Ranking Democratic Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, was joined on the letter by House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (Calif.) and freshman Rep. Charlie Melancon (La.). Melancon’s district covers much of South Louisiana and includes St. Bernard’s Parish, which sustained heavy damage in the flooding that followed Hurricane Katrina.

“When we passed the extension thirteen weeks ago, we estimated that approximately 165,000 individuals would benefit. Today, fewer than half that number are still out of work—proving both the need for extending the disaster benefits and refuting the argument that extending jobless benefits are a disincentive to finding work. Furthermore, the average benefit is only \$104 per week, not enough for a family to pay housing and other living expenses,” the letter reads in part.

The letter calls on the Speaker to bring a bill to extend benefits, HR 5392, to the Floor before the House adjourns for the Memorial Day recess Thursday night.

###

